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connexus

A Magazine for Alberta Government Managers

fall 2006

inside this edition

- Managing a healthy workforce
- Recognizing service excellence
- Learning the Management Essentials in the APS



Creating safe and
healthy workplaces

life at work

your guide to supporting a safe,
happy, and healthy workplace

Alberta

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connexus is published in print and online by the Personnel Administration Office. Its purpose is to keep managers in the Alberta Public Service informed about current policies, goals and programs. It serves to assist in their individual development and that of the Alberta Public Service.

The views expressed in *connexus* are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Personnel Administration Office, nor does publishing them imply endorsement. The editorial policy for this magazine is set out in a document approved by the Public Service Commissioner. A copy can be obtained from the Editor.

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Members of the Promoting Workplace Health Strategy Team, clockwise from back left: Kathy King, Kathy McBain, Michael Miller, Tim Royer, Pam Ewanchuk, Michelle Sylvestre, Tim Hajar, Janine Weber, Eileen Doskoch, Catherine Fendall, Sylvia Hancock.

Photo Credit

Ellis Brothers Photography Ltd.

Inside this edition

Providing employees with resources to support them in doing their best work is one of the greatest responsibilities provincial government managers and supervisors have. Creating an effective and innovative workforce begins when employees walk through the door each morning. It starts with the quality of the work environment.

The government provides a wide range of supports and resources to help build a healthy workplace in support of the physical, social, and emotional health and wellness of its employees. However, the government as an organization is just one of the key players.

Workplace health is a shared responsibility that includes employees and supervisors. It's an ongoing process requiring the continuous development and implementation of strategies. It's everyone's business.

Managers and supervisors have a responsibility to model the way in workplace health and wellness. That's why our cover story focuses on providing managers with information about resources available to assist them in making and keeping health and wellness an important part of every work day.

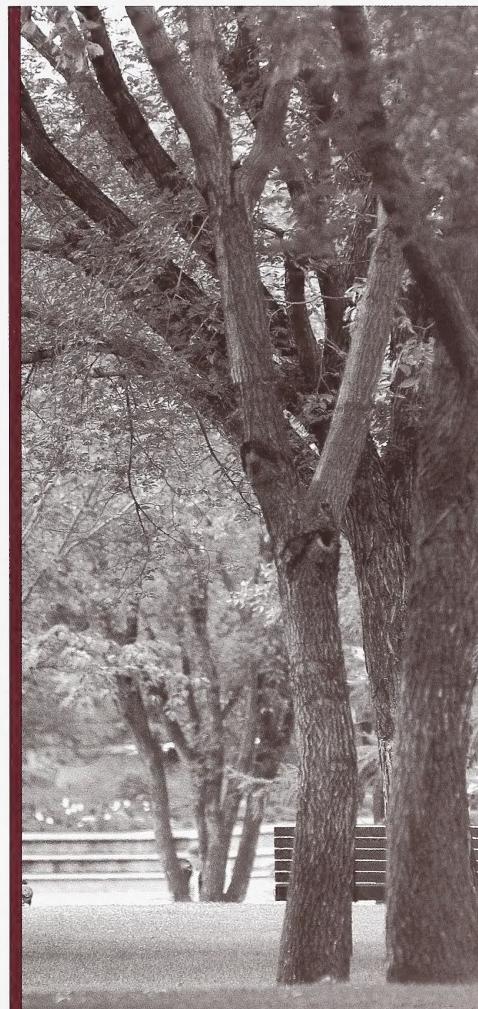
Flip to the centre pages of this edition to learn about developments in the area of workplace health, including a health and wellness resource guidebook, a more consistent approach to assisting employees returning to work after injury or illness, and details about the annual employee flu immunization.

Also in this installment is a must read feature for any manager involved in policy development – an article highlighting the work of and introducing a website launched by the group responsible for co-ordinating long-term strategic planning and policy co-ordination across government, the Policy Co-ordination Office of Executive Council.

This edition also offers congratulations to the latest teams to complete the Deputy Minister of Executive Council Service Excellence Recognition Program, details about the launch of a program to ensure new managers have a strong foundation to be successful, and the story of a foreign student who recently completed an exchange placement with the Government of Alberta.

Before you wade past our introductory article and dive in to the offerings in this edition, we are pleased to introduce you to the newest members of the editorial board for our magazine. Their names can be found in the credits on the opposite page.

These individuals offer input and advice to make sure our magazine continues to provide useful information to managers. Feel free to speak with them about ideas you might have for future articles or to comment on *connexus*.



Recognizing service excellence

Ministry teams across the province are using the Deputy Minister of Executive Council Service Excellence Recognition Program to enhance their client relations.

Three teams received recognition at a ceremony at Government House in Edmonton on June 19. Each team has completed the program requirements and accomplished goals beyond the ones they had originally identified.

Infrastructure and Transportation – Financial Systems and Reporting Team

Infrastructure and Transportation's Financial Systems and Reporting Team set out to achieve customer service excellence by providing staff training and focusing on innovative solutions.

In 16 months, they've provided more than 20 Train the Trainer sessions, implemented new financial reporting tools, and developed a finance intranet for easy access to information and improved communications. But, it also led to some unexpected results, both with clients and within the team.

"We were nicely surprised with the other outcomes like the warm welcome we received from our customers during focus groups, training, and meetings in the process," says team lead Betty Schriver, "and the very positive team environment that developed within our own team."

Education – Zone 5 Services Team

Education's Zone 5 Services team believed they could improve their client services if they could find ways to bridge the geographical challenges that naturally siloed pockets of information. They chose to use the service excellence program to help them "effectively share and manage the knowledge and experience among us," as team lead Sylvia Mutch puts it.

"Collegiality blossomed and geographic barriers dissolved," she says.

Education and Advanced Education – Human Resources and Program Development Team

It took 22 months for the Human Resources and Program Development Team at Education and Advanced Education to complete the program and launch two staff learning and development websites — an incredible accomplishment considering the project began before the ministry split and was completed after the two separate ministries were formed.

"Our goal was to manage a timely and efficient training and development process and program for our staff that contributes to the development of skilled and capable employees," says team lead Loretta Chan.

"It took us some time to reach a clear understanding of our clients and their needs and expectations," she says. "Having gone through the program, we also recognize that service excellence means we will continue to assess and improve business processes, products and services to meet our clients' changing needs. It is a continuous process."

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Get an InSite into policy development

Policy InSite website launched to rave reviews

Across the country and around the world, other jurisdictions traditionally have looked to Alberta for its leadership in policy development.

On July 31, the Policy Co-ordination Office (PCO) of Executive Council launched a product that once again raised the bar. It was the middle of summer, peak time for holidays, and yet when PCO went live with its Policy InSite website, the response was overwhelming.

"In the first three weeks of the launch, there were 292 subscribers and 1,636 visits to the site. It was clear to us that there was a real thirst for the information we're providing," says Marcia Nelson, Senior Executive, PCO.

Providing advice, analysis, and co-ordination to support government-wide strategic planning, policy development, and decision-making, PCO works with ministries to promote co-ordination and collaboration on the cross-ministry priorities.

The Policy InSite website provides the most up-to-date templates and standards for preparing policy documents. It also includes:

- meeting and organization templates
- a project management template
- access to core documents such as the Government of Alberta's Business Plan and Top Priorities, the Speech from the Throne, the budget speech, and more
- many links to resource articles and learning opportunities

As well, the site provides a forum to share practices and tools that policy staff across government have found useful in their work.

The feedback so far is glowingly positive. Wanda Vlahac, Manager, Corporate Planning, Planning and Performance Measurement, Restructuring and Government Efficiency, believes that the website is a valuable resource for a wide variety of people.

"It's a one-stop site, very clearly laying out the processes for anyone involved in any part

of policy work, from research analysts to strategic planners right through to senior executives," she says.

What impresses Vlahac is how the website provides a clear example of the effectiveness of PCO.

"This website is one, very crucial example of the Policy Co-ordination Office's efforts to advance greater openness and cross-ministry co-ordination and dialogue," she says.

"I would have loved to have this site when I first walked into government," says Ulysses Currie, Deputy Minister, Human Resources and Employment, who joined the Alberta Government in 2005.

Of specific interest to Currie is the Guide for Deputy Ministers, "which comes from Ottawa and applies across the country. It ensures that we're in context."

Currie also notes that he will be sharing the Policy InSite website with his staff, since the site allows staff to share best practices and tools that they have found useful.

To find out more about PCO staff and management, you can check them out on the Policy InSite website at <http://policyinsite.gov.ab.ca>.

"We have our phone numbers and e-mail address there . . . and our pictures too, so you can put a face to a name," says Nelson.

As the Policy InSite website continues to evolve, all subscribers to the site will be receiving an e-newsletter highlighting what new and helpful items are being added to the site to help give managers and staff in all government ministries greater "insight."

For more information:
<http://policyinsite.gov.ab.ca>

Policy InSite

Location: Alberta Government Home > Policy InSite > Resources

Resources

Policy Making/Policy Development

- Professional Policy Making for the 21st Century
- Ontario's Policy Matters! Good Public Policy Paper
- The Government of Manitoba's Quality Assurance Guide for Policy Development, Office of the Auditor General
- Better Policy Making
- International Centre of Excellence for Local E-Democracy
- Promoting Longer-Term Policy Thinking
- Can government discover the treasure within?

Policy Advice

- Soft Craft Hard Choices
- Essential Ingredients – Improving the Quality of Advice

Consultation/Citizen Engagement

- CPRN's Mapping the Links: Citizen Involvement in Policy Processes
- Government of Canada's Client Consultation Guide
- Code of Practice on Written Consultation, United Kingdom Cabinet Office's

Please Email Us
any shared practices, tools and resources you use in policy development.

Safe Workplaces. Healthy Employees.

There's no shortage of ways in a media-rich society to find out about living a healthy lifestyle. You can read a newspaper article about eating right, hear radio reports on the latest statistics of the more common illnesses, or settle down in front of TV commercial after commercial about home gyms that fold to fit under a bed.

Even opening the refrigerator is like opening yourself to a flood of healthcare messages plastered on the sides of milk cartons, the tops of margarine tubs, and the labels of fruit juice bottles. The messages are out there . . . and they know where we live.

But are the messages making their way into the workplace?

The Alberta Government's Promoting Workplace Health Strategy Team is working to broaden the interpretation of workplace health to include the practical ways supervisors can help to create workplaces that can adapt to employees' personal health and wellness goals.

Life at Work Reference Guide

The team has recently completed work on a resource about workplace health that will be distributed to Alberta government supervisors across the province.

The guide includes a series of one-page summaries of workplace health initiatives that can be put into a three-ring binder.

"It's a reminder that a workplace environment that supports healthy lifestyles isn't a 'nice-to-have' at work. This is part of how we do our work every day," says team co-chair Tim Royer, senior manager of Health Practices with the Personnel Administration Office (PAO). "We want supervisors — the people with direct influence on the workplace — to know that workplace health is an acknowledgement of all the factors that contribute to employee wellness: the physical, the health, and the social aspects of life at work."

The Life at Work Reference Guide takes its place as a first-stop resource for supervisors about workplace health and safety. The strategy team has converted messages into actions, giving supervisors practical suggestions to encourage good workplace habits in their specific workplace environments.

"We spend more of our active hours at work each day than we do in our other activities," says Georgina Riddell, executive director of Human Resources with Economic Development and team co-chair.

"We really can influence each other when it comes to making healthy choices — like going for a walk with a colleague instead of spending lunch sitting in front of a computer. When supervisors pay particular attention to the physical, the social, and on health, they may find some of the other employee concerns they deal with are resolved."

Life at Work is also dynamic, designed to be added to and adjusted with new information from the team and resources supervisors may already be using. More resources will also be made available by the team on the PAO website over time.

"The point is to have a useful and up-to-date reference right at your fingertips," says Royer. "We collected information that's widely available and I think it's valuable in terms of packaging that information in practical ways."

Riddell agrees.

"Facing our day-to-day work, it's easy to forget about all the supports that are in place for GoA employees. That's why putting it all in one place makes sense, so we know where to turn when employees need our help. Of course, further information is always available from our human resource branches."

When the Life at Work Reference Guide makes its way to you, pop it into a binder or a transparent file folder, and put it someplace where it'll always be readily

available. Because when employees are asking you about their health and safety options at work, you'll need to have your information in one spot, close at hand.

Two resources that will be featured in Life at Work are ESRA and the Return-to-Work Guidelines.

ESRA

The Employee Support and Recovery Assistance (ESRA) Program offers voluntary, early intervention to government employees that can help them during their recovery from medical absence due to illness or injury.

Did you know?

ESRA gets results: Research shows positive results from providing additional health services to employees who have to be off work because of illness or injury. In most cases, the earlier services are provided, the quicker the recovery. Returning employees to modified work arrangements leads to reduced replacement and redistribution costs.

Availability: ESRA services are available through The ECM Group to any Alberta Public Service employee who meets these criteria:

- Eligible for general illness or workers' compensation supplement benefits.
- Has been absent from work for medical reasons for at least 10 consecutive workdays.
- Is a salaried full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary, or a wage employee who has worked at least 2,850 hours.

Employees who are still at work and may benefit from early intervention can participate in the ESRA Health Assessment Program. Contact your human resources branch for details.

Access: Employees can access the ESRA program through either worksite referral or

self-referral. Detailed information is available online at www.pao.gov.ab.ca/esra.

Privacy is protected: Employee information is kept confidential. Information is accessed only as needed by The ECM Group's staff. The ECM Group has a confidentiality policy and all staff have signed an oath of confidentiality.

The employee or the employee's authorized agent may also access the file.

Across Alberta: The ECM Group's health professionals are located in communities throughout the province and travel, when necessary, to meet with employees and workplace representatives.

The ECM Group's services: In the recovery plan stage, The ECM Group will work with the employee, the employee's physician, the supervisor, and possibly ministry human resources staff and union representatives (if applicable).

The ECM Group will also co-ordinate employee health and support services, and will regularly evaluate employee progress and adjust the plan once it has been implemented to help ensure a successful return to work.

Coming Soon: Return-to-Work Guidelines

Returning to work after illness or injury can present challenges supervisors, employees, and colleagues did not expect. Beyond getting back into the swing of the job, it's about working through real concerns like managing workload and overcoming limitations.

Helping employees to reintegrate into the workplace builds positive work relations and helps ministries to meet labour needs in a tight labour market, besides showing employees they are valued for their contributions.

Ministries have shown ingenuity in creating positive experiences for their

returning employees. From adjusting a work environment to providing a modified schedule, they have shown compassion and commitment to their staff.

In some more complicated scenarios, it's hard to know where to start.

"We know there are ways to make the return-to-work more consistently successful for employees and their work groups," says Lillian Helton of the Personnel Administration Office's (PAO) Labour Relations Unit, "and we're working to share some of the good ideas already in place around government."

Helton, along with Brigid Burton in Workplace Health at PAO, has co-led a cross-government project to develop return-to-work guidelines all supervisors can use.

The guidelines, expected to be available to all supervisors across government through upcoming education sessions in early 2007, will outline the steps managers and supervisors can take to make the return-to-work process as smooth as possible.

"Think of it as a practical, go-to guide when you are making an employee's return possible," says Burton. "Most supervisors are so infrequently involved in this scenario, they don't necessarily know where to begin. The Return-to-Work Guidelines will help with those first steps."

The Return-to-Work Guidelines outline roles and responsibilities, the return-to-work process, and the legal framework for defining the need for reasonable accommodation.

A cross-ministry team shared its collective wisdom to develop the guidelines. Cross-ministry participation also helped to create a consistent process everyone in government can use.

"We have seen some creative ideas over the years that supervisors and the HR Community have used to help people return to work," says Helton. "These ideas really help to show the commitment we

have made as an organization to create and sustain healthy workplaces."

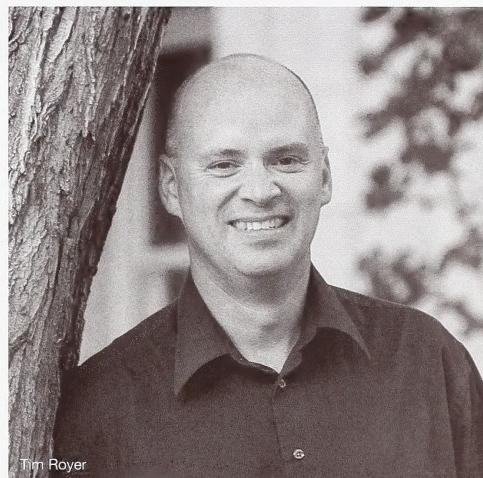
"We've put that commitment in writing in the Workplace Health Framework," confirms Burton. "And it will make the return-to-work worthwhile all around."

For more information:

www.pao.gov.ab.ca/lifeatwork

www.pao.gov.ab.ca/esra

www.pao.gov.ab.ca/returntowork



Tim Royer



Georgina Riddell

to the point

Manufacturing delays in the production of this season's influenza vaccine will postpone immunizations until November this year, according to sources at Health and Wellness.

Traditionally, the flu vaccine becomes available to the public in October.

Michael Miller, a workplace health consultant with the Personnel Administration Office, stresses the importance of taking precautions during the flu season, beyond simply getting a flu shot.

"The Government of Alberta supports employee efforts to stay in good health," says Miller. "Employees in government offices that are offering flu clinics can get vaccinated at no cost. Anyone who chooses to be vaccinated elsewhere can claim the expense through ExClaim. But there are preventive measures we can all take, like washing hands regularly, to help prevent the flu from spreading."

An update on flu vaccine information for 2006

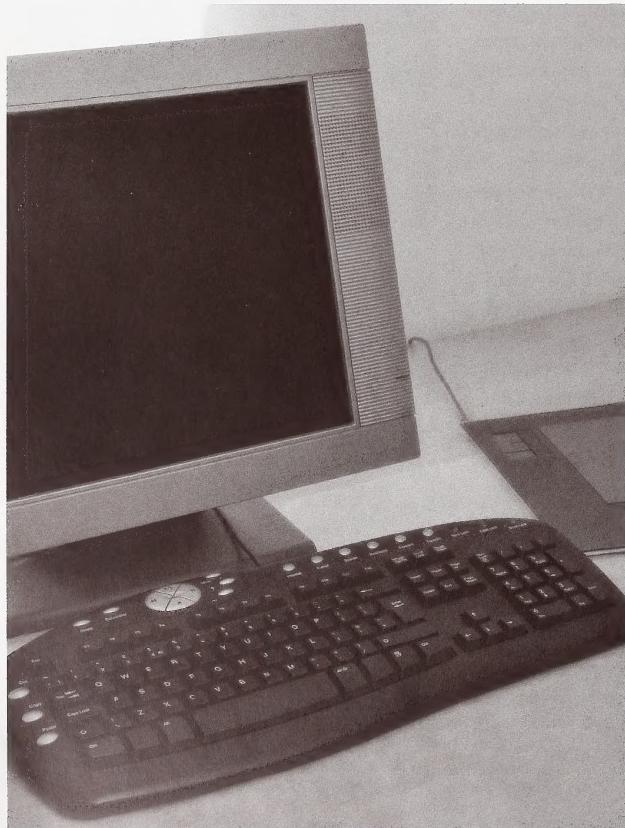
Two strains will be added to this year's flu vaccine when only one strain had been used in prior years. This is based on advice from the World Health Organization.

Like last year, the vaccine will be available first to people classified as high risk before it is available to the general public.

Vaccinations will be available through a variety of service providers, including health regions and physicians' offices. Some ministries are also planning to host flu clinics.

Detailed information about your flu vaccine options will be available through your ministry's HR branch in October.

For more flu prevention information, visit www.health.gov.ab.ca and choose Influenza Self-Care from the menu on the left.



Improving together Participate in the 2006 Corporate Employee Survey

The 2006 Government of Alberta Corporate Employee Survey started on September 25 and until late November, you and your staff may be contacted by phone, mail, or e-mail to participate.

Through the survey, you can provide your input about the work you do, the environment you work in, and the programs and supports available to you.

All individual responses are anonymous. Research Innovations Inc., an external research firm, conducts the survey and provides only a summary of all the information collected.

By participating, you are giving your ministry constructive feedback to guide ongoing improvements in your workplace environment. Results from the survey also measure progress on government-wide human resource management strategies and help to identify priorities in the Alberta Public Service Human Resource Plan.

Please plan to participate if you are contacted and encourage your staff to do the same.

For more information:

- Visit www.pao.gov.ab.ca/eesurvey
- Contact your ministry's human resources branch
- Contact the Government of Alberta survey co-ordinator, Lila Borhot, at (780) 408-8418

Getting down to the essentials

The Management Essentials in the APS program, targeted at helping new public service managers explore and navigate the many facets of their roles and responsibilities, had its much-anticipated launch this fall.

The three-day program was piloted in March to a group of 24 managers from 22 departments in the Government of Alberta. Staff with the Personnel Administration Office (PAO) worked with Barbara Ireland, principal for Human Potentials Group Inc., to develop the program. She also delivered the pilot program along with PAO's director of Employee Development, Brian Supervich. Participant feedback showed that the dynamic combination of the duo's experience was exceptionally valuable.

"In the pilot, we wanted to try to capture various basic experiences of being a manager in the public service," said Natalie Wallace, program manager with PAO. "The pilot group included experienced and new managers from across the Alberta Public Service, which resulted in an incredibly dynamic group with lots of contributions. By sharing and connecting with managers from different ministries, everyone gained some gems of wisdom about working in the APS."

Program Outline

The first day of the program focuses on finance and administration. There are a number of topics, ranging from "the big picture" to finance essentials, budget essentials, and business planning. The modules offer a mix of different exercises, guest speakers, mini lectures, scenarios, and discussions.

Wallace notes that the program uses different teaching methods to relay information about what managers would benefit from knowing, how to find out more, and what resources or supports are available to them.

Managing People is the focus of the second day.

This is human resources day, with an overview of HR policies and practices, from building capacity to labour relations.

One participant noted, "I appreciated the real-life examples of how to deal with difficult situations." Another participant commented, "today gave me some great tools and suggestions for implementation immediately."

The last day of the program is focused on Managing Information and covers topics related to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act, records management, communications, issues management, and information security.

"We are fortunate to have an experienced group of subject matter experts from across the APS on our Curriculum Advisory Committee to continually evaluate the content," says Wallace.

This content team also participates in the program as guest presenters. There are six guest presentations over the three-day program.

Although the program targets managers who are new to the APS or their manager role, experienced managers are welcome to register if they are looking for more information and tips on the foundations of managing in the APS.

"Even experienced managers may find many gems along the way or appreciate the opportunity to network with other managers across government," says Wallace. "I encourage managers who are unsure if this program is a good fit for them to consult their human resource branches."

The four fall offerings of the three-day program were full within weeks of registration, which opened in early July. The spring/summer 2007 offerings will be announced through ministry human resource branches in early October. Registration is available through MyAGent.

Looking at current demand, it is expected that this program will continue to grow and evolve over the coming years.

For more information: Natalie Wallace, Tel: (780) 427-5590, E-mail: natalie.wallace@gov.ab.ca.



Natalie Wallace

Many thanks go to the members of the Management Essentials in the APS Curriculum Advisory Committee whose advice and experience continue to shape this program:

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Murray Lyle
Executive Director, Finance

Rick Nisbet
Executive Director, HR&E

Lorne Saul-Demers
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Marylin Mun
Director, OIPC

Lenore Neudorf
Arbitration & Disputes Advisor, PAO

Serge Dupuis
Chief Information Security Officer, RGE

Lori Stevens
Training Consultant, RGE

“This training has been just excellent and very timely. I have enjoyed the networking and discussion opportunities to ask and receive input on questions I have had for a couple of months. **”**

- a new manager who participated in the pilot



Conny Gauger

International leadership

AIESEC student shares her internship experience

When German student Conny Gauger packed her bags to leave her home country for an internship, she wasn't worried about where she would be living. But she cared a great deal about where she would be working. After all, she would spend about forty hours each week in a workplace environment, so for Gauger, it had to be a good fit.

Fit is what she found with the Government of Alberta. The Personnel Administration Office (PAO) was the "obvious choice" to the student from the University of Bremen.

She found the posting through AIESEC.

The largest student-run organization globally, AIESEC helps university students to develop their potential as leaders in their fields, but also as global citizens. One of the ways students do this is by working directly for AIESEC, where they gain practical business experience to put their post-secondary education into practice.

Another method for students to grow and learn is the Global Internship Program. AIESEC has been matching students with international internships since 1948. Today, students from 800 universities around the world are finding unique and challenging work experiences in over 90 countries with organizations from large corporate multinationals, to not-for-profit organizations, to government. The universities of Alberta and Calgary both have AIESEC chapters.

AIESEC uses a comprehensive database system to match student skills and expectations with partnering company job profiles.

"The job posting at PAO was an excellent match," recalls Gauger, whose 10-month AIESEC placement came to a close at the end of June 2006. "It was an almost word-for-word description of my experience. I also wanted to leave Europe, so my placement would be more of a true exchange – I couldn't be tempted to go home every weekend while working in Canada!"

Gauger had previous international experience through exchanges in Spain, Japan, and the United States. She is fluent in three languages and proficient in a fourth, and has private sector experiences, as well as a degree in business law and statistics.

Companies in Germany value graduates with international experience, so the competitive advantage she gains returning to a country with a relatively high unemployment rate is clear. But what advantages are there for the employer?

For one thing, AIESEC Canada has set up a process that makes it easy for employers to access world-class talent.

Talent pre-selection: AIESEC screens candidates to ensure they are meeting a high standard by checking credentials and leadership experience and testing for fluency.

"I had to go through a screening process," says Gauger. "I couldn't be selected based on my resume alone. I took written and oral fluency tests in three languages and had to have my skills reviewed."

Needs identification: Employers define the specific skill set they need from an intern. They can also set up the timeline during which the intern will work, choosing the start and end dates and a duration that lasts between two and 18 months.

Intern selection: AIESEC's database prioritizes the list of candidates who best meet the employers' preferred skill set. This takes about two weeks from the end of the needs identification step to generate.

Pre-arrival services: There is no need to worry about visas, accommodations, or the logistics of bringing a student to you. AIESEC handles these details. Meanwhile, interns go through months of cross-cultural training to help them adjust to their new environments as smoothly as possible.

Community integration: When interns arrive, they are part of a community through the incoming AIESEC chapter. Having support systems and social networks helps to enrich student experiences.

Gauger already knew she wanted to experience Canadian culture, so she made a point of getting to know her colleagues at PAO.

"This way," she says, "I've been able to see and understand Canadian culture better."

Ongoing services: AIESEC is available to help employers and interns throughout the process.

"Working with the Promoting Workplace Health cross-government team," says Gauger, "I have a better understanding of what's important to employees. People here have some power to affect policy and law, which leads to some impressive social services. And the atmosphere in the workplace is much different here than in Germany, where we are used to a more formal structure. I have a better idea how to treat employees when I am in a management position."

Back in Bremen, Gauger is gearing up to continue studies in a master's program. When she graduates, she hopes to find employment with an international company that specializes in risk management, insurance, or banking. With a solid set of skills and experiences behind her, she's got a bright future ahead.

Is an AIESEC intern in your future? For more information, visit www.aiesec.ca. Employers in Edmonton can also contact the University of Alberta Chapter at www.aiesec.ca/edmonton. Calgary employers can visit www.aiesec.ca/calgary to view information on the University of Calgary Chapter.

Trading places

an ESMM update

Cynthia Farmer spent the July long weekend watching precious Alberta land go up in flames.

From the safe perch of a helicopter hovering over a blaze hundreds of kilometres outside of Fort McMurray, she watched as firefighters using enormous equipment worked hard to keep the fire at bay.

On other, calmer days, she has found herself doing everything from banding Peregrine falcons to feeding 20,000 trout in a Calgary hatchery.

"It's great to come into work. I never know what's waiting for me!" says the director of Public Information, Education and Outreach Programs with Sustainable Resource Development (SRD).

Before taking this position, she was at Children's Services as the director of Youth Strategies. She got the opportunity to try something new by participating in the Executive and Senior Manager Mobility Program (ESMMP).

Entering into ESMMP, a program that supports the movement of executives and senior managers between departments on developmental secondments, Farmer was up for the challenge. Through ESMMP, those in the senior manager to assistant deputy minister levels are encouraged to participate in one-year secondments in a different ministry.

"It's a whole new program I'm in," she says. "I was brought in to develop a framework, and while I already knew a lot about strategic planning, team building, and leadership, I didn't have a network in this specific area. So I had to build it."

Within her first two weeks in her new position, Farmer found herself having to coordinate to a two-day summit on the mountain pine beetle in Alberta and British Columbia. Her knowledge of the beetle may have been meager and she didn't know any of the stakeholders involved, but with hard work and a quick turnaround, the summit was a great success. Talk about a trial by fire!

While Farmer's adventure took her from Children's Services to SRD, ESMMP has also transported Deryl Empson, director of Enforcement-Field Services for the Fish and Wildlife Division of SRD, to a new post for a year. Now, as he prepares for his return to SRD, he looks back at what he learned as chief negotiator with the First Nations and Métis Relations Division of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development on First Nations self-governance issues.

"At the outset, there were days when I felt like a fish out of water," says Empson. "Some of the discussions and processes I'm involved in have been ongoing for some time – years in some cases – and it was a challenge at first to get up to speed on those files."

ESMMP helps leaders in the Alberta Public Service build their leadership skills and gain experiences beyond their current portfolios and ministries.

"I know I will become a better manager with a greater appreciation for other perspectives and a deeper understanding that we all serve Albertans in a different way," says Farmer.

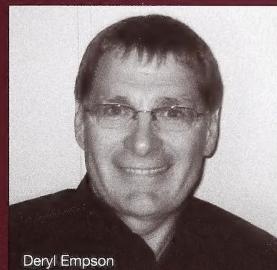
Empson concurs. "The ESMMP complements very well the concept of cross-ministry priorities that also fosters common objectives and co-operation among ministries. It's easy to get focused on your own little world when you work in it for many years," he admits.

In other words, it's all about walking a mile in someone else's shoes. And how does it feel?

"I am having the time of my life!" says Farmer.



Cynthia Farmer



Deryl Empson

Editor's note: Executive and Senior Manager Mobility Program (ESMMP) participants will be sharing their experiences in an ongoing feature in *connexus*. ESMMP seconds executive and senior managers to different roles within government to build their knowledge and experience in new areas. It is an initiative under the Alberta Public Service Human Resource Plan.



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The Alberta Public Service Vision and Values Website has been updated and now provides even more resources to assist you in making the vision and values part of the way we work.

Updates include:

- A handbook with information about how managers and supervisors can incorporate the vision and values into their team's work.
 - Profiles of employees sharing their experiences about the vision and values.
 - A summary of the vision and value staff events held over the summer, including photos from each of the eight events and an online video of one of the events, in case you couldn't attend when they were held.

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MESSAGE FROM RON HICKS

Deputy Minister of Executive Council

Welcome to the Alberta Public Service Vision and Values Website!

Every member of our public service contributes to the success of the province. We are committed to individuals and families living in our province and to supporting government in achieving its mandate to build a better Alberta for all Albertans.

Sometimes, we get so immersed in our work that we forget to reflect on the importance of having a clear understanding of where we are headed, what we do, and how we do it – and why.

After several months discussing our vision and values with public service employees across the province, vision and value statements that will guide the way forward in our everyday work as a public service were introduced in June 2008.

I know that our public service is up to the task of bringing the vision and values to life in our daily work so they move from being words on the wall to being lived every day. Because you all identified how important they are to you.

Doing that successfully takes the commitment, determination, and participation of each and every one of us. That's where this website comes in.

SUCCESSFUL STAFF EVENTS

Could it make it one of the events? Watch it online!

Staff event held across the province, where managers had an opportunity to learn about the renewed vision and values, wrapped up in July.

Over 5,000 members of the public service participated in one of eight events held in seven communities in the province.

Read more about the staff events

Watch the staff event online

LIVING THE VISION AND VALUES

Employees share their stories

Making the vision and values part of how we work will take involvement from all of us. Here are some ways you can help:

We'd love to hear about how your coworkers have made the vision and values part of your daily work.

Send us a short article or video about you or someone you know who is bringing the vision and values to life.

Send your article or video to us at aps.visionandvalues@gov.ab.ca

or

RESPECT
We honor an environment of mutual respect, trust and accountability.


ACCOUNTABILITY
We are responsible for our actions and accountable for the outcomes of the work we do.


EXCELLENCE
We also innovation and continuous improvement to achieve excellence.


Visit and bookmark the Vision and Values Website:
www.pao.gov.ab.ca/apsvisionandvalues.



**RESPECT
ACCOUNTABILITY
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EXCELLENCE**

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connexus magazine reaches about 4,000 government managers across Alberta. If your ministry has information to share with this group, you can reach us by e-mail at connexus@gov.ab.ca or by regular mail to:

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